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The Prayer  
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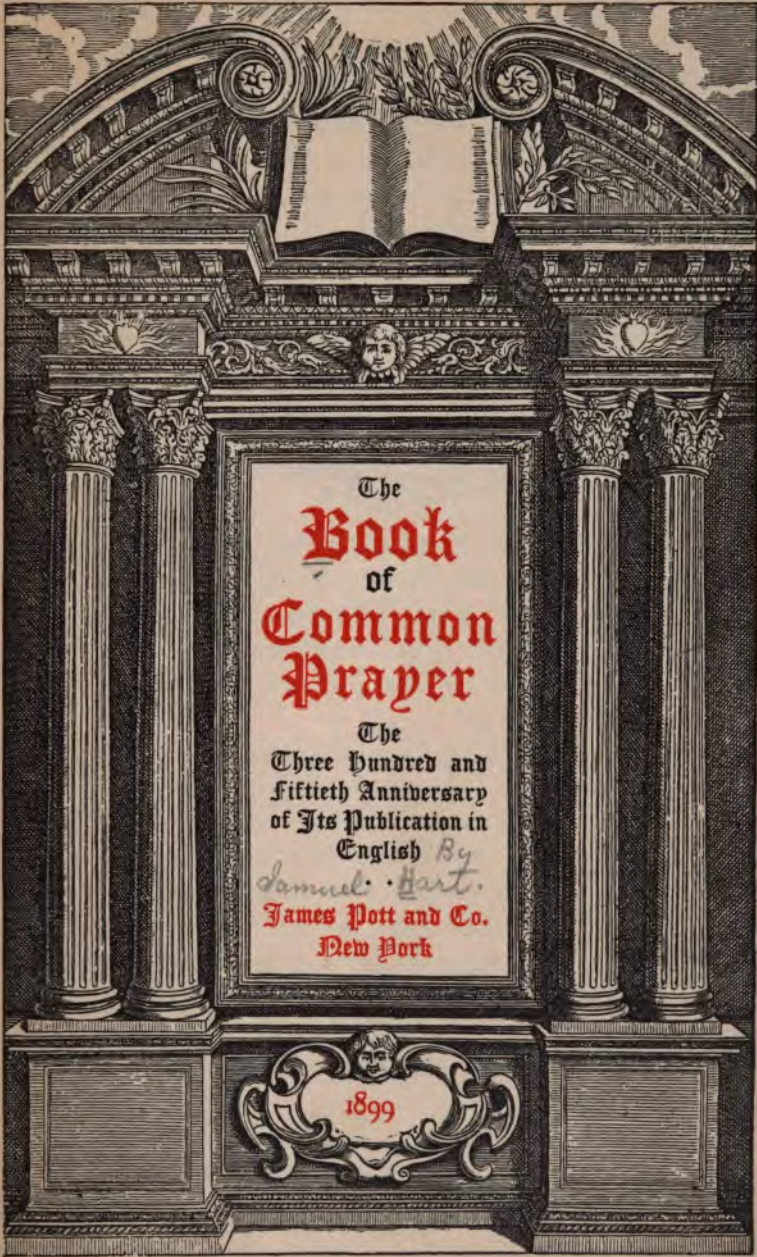




**The Prayer Book in English**

**MDLIX-MDCCCXC**





The  
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of  
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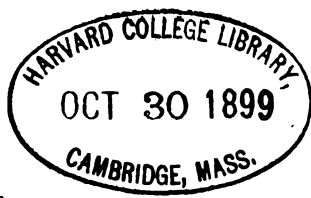
The  
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of Its Publication in  
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*Samuel Hart.*  
**James Pott and Co.**  
**New York**

1899



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## Prefatory Note



*A*t the last General Convention attention was called to the fact that the Whitsunday of 1899 would be the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the publication of the Book of Common Prayer in English, and that the occasion might be well "employed for the better instruction of the people in the history and meaning of the book." In the House of Deputies, the Committee on the State of the Church expressed the hope that the occasion might be "used to rehearse the history of the Prayer Book and to inculcate the important lessons taught by that history." And the House of Bishops, in the Pastoral Letter, "most earnestly" asked "that the day be observed in our churches as commemorating an event which, more than any other single gift of God, has reversed the confusion of tongues, by giving to the lips of countless worshippers the one mouth in which to show forth God's praise."

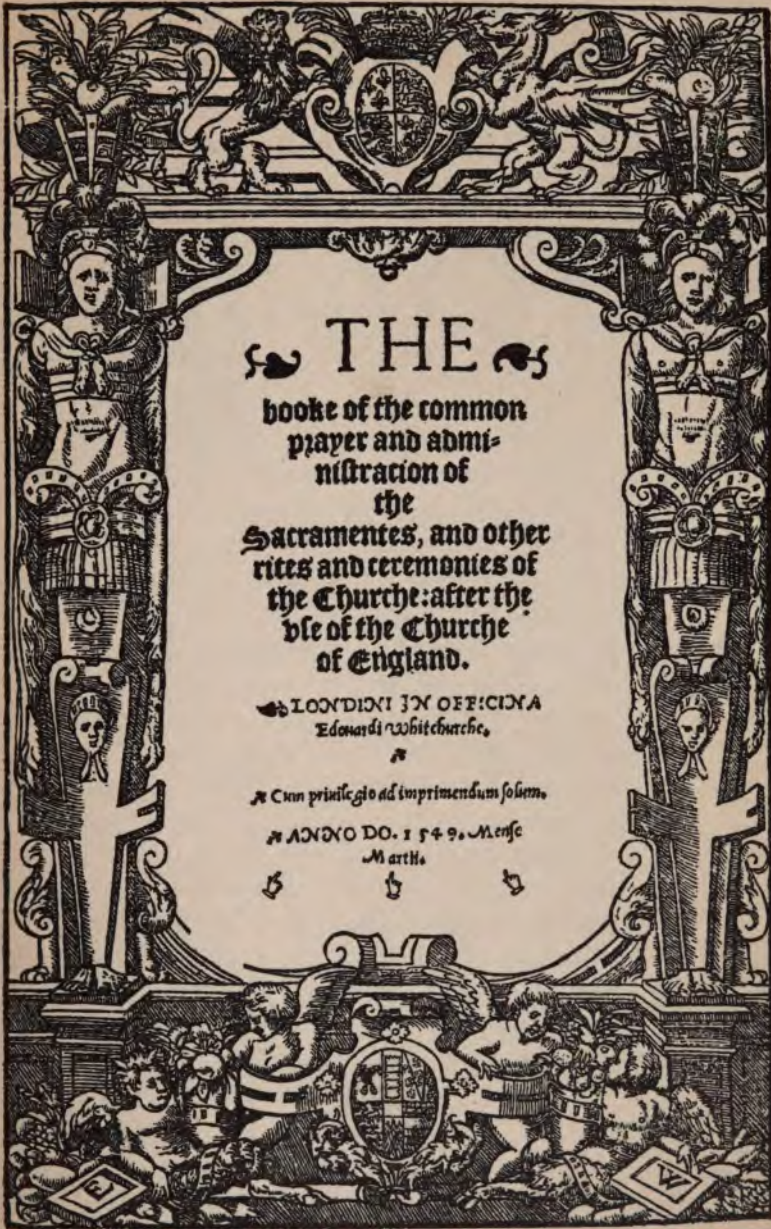
¶ Some of us have been familiar with the Prayer Book, or at least with parts of it, for many years; and others are growing familiar with it as children or youths or more mature men and women. But few of us have studied either the words or the structure or the history of the Book as carefully as we might well do; and sometimes the very familiarity keeps us from asking the questions which we ought to ask or makes it difficult for us to answer the questions which others ask. This brief sketch of the history of the Prayer Book which I have prepared will answer but

# Prefatory Note

*few of these questions; but it may perhaps serve, at this anniversary, to increase the interest in some matters connected with the Book and to encourage the asking of more questions and the search for the answers to them. And certainly it is most appropriate that the New York Bible and Common Prayer Book Society should take this opportunity to remind Churchmen, not only of the value of the Prayer Book itself, but also of the importance of intelligently understanding both the Book and its history.*

SAMUEL HART

*Whitsun-eve, 1899*



THE  
booke of the common  
prayer and admi-  
nistracion of  
the  
Sacramentes, and other  
rites and ceremonies of  
the Church: after the  
vble of the Church  
of England.

LONDON IN OFFICINA  
Edvardi Whitechurch,

¶ Cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum.

ANNO DO. 1549. Mense  
Martii

Fac-simile of the Title-page of the First Edition of the Prayer-Book in English





# The Prayer Book in English • A. D. Mdxlix- • Mcccxcix ❖❖



**N** Whitsunday in the year 1549, just three hundred and fifty years ago, the English Prayer Book was first used. Three centuries and a half is not a very large part of the nineteen centuries of the Church's history; but when we compare the time with the duration of almost anything on earth except the Church of Christ, we shall say that the Prayer Book has lasted for a long while, so that it has become one of the institutions of the world. In 1549, the boy-king, Edward VI., had been but two years on the throne of England, having succeeded his father, the bluff old Henry VIII.; printing had been invented barely a century before; it was but fifty-seven years since Columbus had discovered the new world, and no permanent English settlement had yet been made on the American continent; the whole of the Bible had been translated into English and copies had been placed in the churches, but sixty-two years were to elapse before the so-called Authorized Version should be made. It was a time of great excitement in both the political and the religious world of western Europe, and politics and religion were strangely confused in that great move-

# The Prayer Book

ment which we call the Reformation.

The world has changed wonderfully in these three hundred and fifty years, and no part of it has changed more, or made more real progress, than its English-speaking part. There are English colonies in all quarters of the earth, and English outposts in many places where there are not colonies as yet; a great republic has grown up here in North America, which is a nation of English language and habits and law; many books have been written in English prose and poetry, which have a lasting place in the literature of the world; men live very differently now from the way in which they lived when Edward VI. was king, and the surroundings of their lives have changed greatly. But wherever Englishmen have gone and whatever they have done, they have carried with them and have used the Bible and the Prayer Book in their own language; these volumes have come to be the real "wells of English undefiled," unequalled for beauty and power by anything else that has been written; and with all the changes of "times, places, and men's manners," this shows that the wants of men's souls are always the same. We are not surprised that the Bible, which is the Word of God, should satisfy these wants and prove to be what all men, everywhere and at all times, need; but it seems wonderful that the same book of public worship, with but very few changes, should have satisfied so many people for so many years. At least two million copies

## in English

are in use in the United States, and tens of millions in England and her colonies; each of these copies is a teacher, and many of them are missionaries; and the book has a strong influence for good on the character of every one who uses it.

As it is with many other excellent things which we have and use, so it is with the Prayer Book: for the very reason that we use it and get good from it all the time, we do not always think how much it is worth to us. This anniversary year will be a good time for us to study our Prayer Book and to study about it; to study it, by at least reading it carefully through, rubrics and all; and to study about it, by learning all we can of its history and meaning. We shall find that it is one of the most interesting of all books, as well as one that is full of instruction and help.



## The Prayer Book not New in the Year Mdxlix



WE all know that the Bible was not new when it was first given to the English people in their own language. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew before Christ came into the world, and the New Testament was written in Greek soon after He ascended into heaven. Those who had learned these languages could read the sacred

# The Prayer Book

books as they were written. But, as the Church went all over the world, the Bishops and Priests who taught its truth—the missionaries of those days—had to speak to men of different countries in such a way that they could be understood; it was necessary either that they should learn the languages of those to whom they went, or that they should persuade these others to learn the language which they themselves spoke. Our missionaries to-day do sometimes the one and sometimes the other of these things; and sometimes, to the satisfaction of all, they do both. In the earlier days, at least in western Europe, the more natural course was to try to make the “barbarians,” as they were called, understand the language of the missionaries, which was Latin. There was a double reason for this: first, because the Romans were conquering all that part of the world, and thus Latin was heard everywhere and was used in courts and armies and for business of every kind; and secondly, because the native languages had not yet grown to be of importance enough to demand attention. So, even in the British Isles, the Gospel was largely preached in Latin, and the Bible was read or recited from versions made into that language. In course of time there was an Anglo-Saxon language, into which some parts of the Bible were put in verse or prose; and then, after the Norman Conquest, our modern English grew to be a real language, and Wycklif and others translated the Bible into it, though they did not, as we should say, publish their translations. But by this time



## ¶¶ in English ¶¶

Latin had come to be looked upon as a kind of sacred language, and its use had grown into a custom for religious purposes; so that, strange to say, it was more and more used, and people knew less and less of it. At last the time came when it was seen that this was all wrong; good Bishops and Priests were persuaded that they must read God's Word to the people in a language that they could understand, and the people, who were hungry for God's Word, knew that they had the right to read it, or at least to hear it, in their own mother tongue. Then the whole Bible was translated into English and printed in large type, and put where the people could find it and where those who knew how to read could read it to others. It was no new Bible; it was not a "revised" or "reformed" Bible; it was the old Bible, with a "reformation" in the way of using it.

Now before 1549 it had been with the Prayer Book as with the Bible. There had been forms for daily worship and for ministering Baptism and the Holy Communion and for other sacred services, from the very earliest days of the history of the Church; and in what we now call England, after the Church had been founded there, there had never been a time when such forms were not in use; practically they were the same all over western Europe. But, as in the case of the Bible, they were at first naturally, and after that unfortunately, in Latin; only there was this difference, that they were liable to be changed and were changed as time went on, until the daily services,



# The Prayer Book

with their reading and singing, ceased to be services for the people at all, and in the service of the Holy Communion (called by the Latin name of the "Mass") the people had to be content with watching what the Priest did, and believing that it was the act of worship of which they were told. And the changes that were made were, as might be expected, nearly always changes for the worse. The services for the seven hours of the day, which were said only by the priests and monks, who knew Latin, became very complicated and hard to follow, while the amount of Scripture that was read in them became very small, and many stories were introduced which were not edifying or not true; while the most sacred service of the Holy Communion, at which the people were expected to attend, had become for many of them only a ceremony, and was surrounded by superstitions. What was needed in the case of the Bible was simply to translate it and give it to the people in English; but in the case of the services, in order that there might be a Book of Common Prayer, it was necessary not only to put them into English, but also to make them more simple and more true. And this making them more simple and more true could be done, and was done, after the manner of every real reformation in the Church, by making them more like what they had been at the first. Archbishop Cranmer, and others who worked with him, knew the importance of all this; they were familiar with the old forms, and they

## ¶¶ in English ¶¶

knew how to make them of use for the English Church of their own day; and the Archbishop, besides, had remarkable skill in understanding the meaning of the Latin collects and other prayers and putting it into English words and phrases. The result was that there was almost nothing new in the Prayer Book of 1549. It had the old versicles and canticles and creeds and prayers, the old collects (most of them then already about a thousand years old) with their Epistles and Gospels; it had the Psalms so arranged as to be read through once a month; it had tables of daily lessons from the Bible, much longer than had been read for a great while, because the people were hungry, as was said, for the Word of God. And those things were corrected which had been wrong; new things which told of error were left out, and old things which were needed to express the truth were brought back. And so the first Prayer Book which the English people had in their own tongue was prepared for them on the principle of their whole Reformation; it was the old way of worship, made more simple and more true than it had been, by making it like what the Apostles and the early Bishops would have used and taught. It was thus with the daily services, with the forms for ministering the Sacraments, and with those for the other rites and ceremonies of the Church, all of which were included in the one Book of Common Prayer.

The people were prepared for this, and anxious for

## The Prayer Book

it. There had been books of private devotion, called "Primers," which had in them Psalms and prayers and short Bible readings in English; and after the invention of printing these had become fairly common; so that intelligent men and women knew parts of some of the ancient services. Besides this, before the end of the reign of Henry VIII., in 1544, a Litany was prepared in English for popular use, which is almost exactly the same as our present Litany; and very soon after Edward VI. became king, an English "Order of the Communion" was published—this was in 1548—which was to be used after the Priest had celebrated Mass and consecrated the bread and wine according to the old form in Latin; it provided that the people should be prepared by the Confession and Absolution and Comfortable Words, as they are now in our Communion Service, to receive the blessed Sacrament of the Saviour's Body and Blood. These came into their proper places in the Prayer Book, for which they prepared the way, and which, we are told, was ready in March, 1549. Its use was delayed for three months, partly, no doubt, that those who were to use it might become familiar with it, but partly that it might have its beginning on Whitsunday, as a work which had had, and for which men prayed that it might ever have, the blessing of the Holy Ghost. And so it is that, though there was almost nothing new in the English Prayer Book, yet as a Prayer Book in English it dates from Whitsunday, three hundred and fifty years ago.



# The Prayer Book in England since the Year Mdxlix

**T**HE Prayer Book has been constantly used in the English Church for all the years since 1549. Twice its use has been forbidden by law: during the reign of Queen Mary, from 1553 to 1558, when cruel means were used against all attempts to reform the Church; and again at the end of the reign of Charles I. and during the Commonwealth, from 1645 to 1660, when the Presbyterians and the Independents were in power. But even in these times the services of the book were read in secret, so that it is quite true that its use has been constant. A new edition was prepared and published in 1552, largely under the influence of some who thought that there should be more changes from the old forms than had been made; but this book could hardly have come into use in many places before the boy-king died. The reign of Queen Mary, with its bloody persecutions, brought English Churchmen together and made them see what it was for which they must stand together and contend. Soon after the accession of Queen Elizabeth, in 1559, the Prayer Book was again set forth, care being taken to commend it to the judgment of all sober-minded English people, and to unite, as far as possible, the advantages of the first and the second Prayer Books of Edward VI. Since that time the

# The Prayer Book

changes in the book have been for the most part quite unimportant. A few were made after Queen Elizabeth's death, in 1604, as the result of an argument between Churchmen and Puritans in the presence of King James I., about objections which had been made to certain matters; and a few others date from 1662, after the end of the Commonwealth and the restoration of Charles II., when the book was put into its present form. It remains to-day exactly as it was left then, except for new tables of lessons adopted about thirty years ago, and the necessary changes in the names of the sovereign and members of the royal family, who are mentioned in the prayers. Permission has been given by Convocation and Parliament for some shortening of the daily services, but no alteration has been made in the rubrics.

Thus the book has remained the same in all these years, the editions, at least since 1559, hardly differing in anything that would be noticed by the ordinary reader. Its position and influence are well described in the words of a recent historian:

✓ “Based upon services which had behind them fifteen hundred years of Christian thought, translated into deep and rich English with rare taste and delicacy, strengthened by the best products of contemporary learning, and brought into close dependence upon the authority of Holy Scripture, the Book of Common Prayer has slowly but surely won its way into the hearts and minds of Englishmen. It has become their



## ❧ ❧ in English ❧ ❧

manual of private devotion as well as their book of public worship. The religious and moral life of England for three centuries [and a half] has rested upon the Bible and the Prayer Book, and the national character would not be what it is, had either of them been banished from her history.” ✓

If Archbishop Cranmer, or Queen Elizabeth, or Sir Walter Raleigh were to come to-day into any English cathedral or parish church, or into any of our churches in the United States, the service would at once be recognized as the same in which the worshipper had often taken part years ago, the only difficulty being in the changes of pronunciation which the lapse of time has brought into the language. And even those who used the old Latin services, could they but be given a knowledge of the English language, would soon see that as the English Church has kept the ancient creeds and the ancient Scriptures and the ancient ministry, so she has kept the worship of ancient times, not only in its principles, but in its very forms and words. ✓





# The Book of Common Prayer

And Administration of the Sacraments  
And other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church  
According to the use of The Protestant Episcopal Church  
In the United States of America

Together with

The Psalter or Psalms of David



New York: Printed for the Committee  
MDCCLXXII

Benedicite omnia

opera Domini

Domino; laudate

et superexaltate

eum in saecula

Fac-simile of the Title-page of the Limited Edition of the Standard Prayer-Book of  
MDCCLXXII



# The Prayer Book in the United States



WHEN English explorers and colonists came to the Western world, those who were Churchmen brought with them their Prayer Books, and many of the expeditions had their chaplains. In 1579, when Sir Francis Drake landed on the coast of California, his chaplain read prayers; and this was probably the first use of the Prayer Book within the present limits of the United States. But the first permanent settlement in which it was used was that made at Jamestown in 1607, only fifty-eight years after the book was set forth in England, and four years before the publication of what we call the Authorized Version of the Bible. Thus in Virginia the Prayer Book came with the settlers; to other colonies it was brought, at least for public use, by royal governors; and in others it came more quietly, as in Connecticut, where a single copy, belonging to a man in a country town, was "the first and best missionary" of the Church. Wherever Churchmen were gathered in congregations, and in many places before they assembled for worship, they followed the forms of service of the mother Church. No Bishop ever visited the colonies to confirm and ordain, so that the Confirmation and Ordination Services were



# The Prayer Book

not used here; and it is said that some clergymen did not read at the end of the Baptismal Office the charge to the sponsors that they should take care to have the child brought to the Bishop to be confirmed. But in other respects they used the book as it stood.

Immediately after the Declaration of Independence, the vestry of the parish of Christ and St. Peter's Churches in Philadelphia directed that the prayers for the king and the royal family should no longer be used; and the Legislature of Virginia ordered that these prayers should be "accommodated to the change of affairs." A like course was followed elsewhere, but some of the clergy would make no alteration in any service until the independence of the United States was acknowledged; of these, part ceased to minister in public, and part persisted in officiating at the risk of loss of liberty or of life. But when the War of the Revolution was over, no one doubted that the Church in these States was free, and was bound to act for itself. The clergy of Connecticut met before the proclamation of peace, elected Dr. Samuel Seabury to be their Bishop, and sent him abroad to seek for consecration in England or (failing there) in Scotland. When he returned, in 1785, one of his first acts was to instruct his clergy as to the necessary changes in the Prayer Book; and in the next year he set forth a Communion Office like that which he had found in use among the Scottish Churchmen. Before this time, however, a convention of clerical and lay deputies

## in the United States

from New York and states south of it had met, and had agreed to propose for use a Prayer Book based on the English book, but differing from it in important matters. This work, which is known as the "Proposed Book," was not well received either here or in England, and it was practically withdrawn. In 1787 the English Bishops consecrated Dr. William White to be Bishop of Pennsylvania and Dr. Samuel Provoost to be Bishop of New York; and at length, in October, 1789, the first really General Convention met in Philadelphia, at which delegates from all parts of the country were present. It proceeded to a revision of the English Prayer Book, to adapt it to the needs of this new land; and it was ordered that this American Prayer Book, as we call it, should go into use on the first day of October, 1790, nearly a hundred and ten years ago. There were some alterations from the English book made necessary by the independence of the United States; opportunity was taken to change some words that were likely to be misunderstood, and to make some services more easily used; and the tables of Sunday lessons were prepared on a new plan. The important change was the insertion in the Communion Office of a Prayer of Consecration, almost exactly the same as that which Bishop Seabury had brought to his diocese from Scotland; it was more like that in the first Prayer Book of 1549, and very much more like those used in the early Church, than is the corresponding prayer in the present English book.

# The Prayer Book

While we are grateful to the English Church for all that has come to us from her hands, we should not forget what we owe to the Scottish Church.

Thus the American edition of the Prayer Book in English was prepared and came into use. It remained unchanged, except in one or two places, until a very few years ago. In 1880 a committee was appointed by the General Convention to consider whether, at the end of a hundred years, it was desirable that any additions should be made to the Prayer Book, or any changes should be made in the rubrics which directed its use. Much attention was given to this work, and the result was the adoption of a new Standard Prayer Book in 1892, into which were incorporated all the alterations and additions that had been made. The alterations were mostly in the rubrics, partly for clearness and partly to allow for some variety in the services; the chief additions were the *Magnificat* and the *Nunc Dimittis* at Evening Prayer, the Penitential Office, the services for the Feast of the Transfiguration, and certain special prayers and thanksgivings, among them a prayer for missions. It is very interesting to note how, when our Church seriously considered whether she needed to make any changes in her Prayer Book as she came to the beginning of the second century of her independent history, she found that a few alterations and additions were all that were required. In fact, she was confident that she was, in this regard, well furnished for her work; and such special prepa-

# in the United States

ration as it seemed desirable to make was, in great part, the taking back of things which belonged to an earlier day and had been for a time displaced.

This is in outline the history of the Prayer Book in English, its origin, its preparation, its use. The book, one of the best things that God has given His Church, has done and is doing a noble work for His glory and the benefit of His people; and this work we may well believe that it will continue to do until the Lord shall come again.







**The New York Bible and Common  
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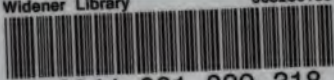
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